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1. Imagine you are an examiner who wants to assess what outcomes you have achieved on the topic of personhood. Write three *questions* (yes, questions) based on the preceding section on personhood that you might set for an examination.

- a. _____
 b. _____
 c. _____

2. Write a paragraph answer to one of these questions.

3. What sort of questions did you ask?

For each question that you wrote, explain whether the question had an answer you could get by re-reading the section or whether it was a question that required you to think a lot about what “personhood” is.

- a. _____
 b. _____
 c. _____

4. When we look into the eyes of a chimp, there seems to be something there that is similar to that which we see when we look into the eyes of humans. What about gorillas, bonobos, orang utans? They seem to have many of the same characteristics as humans.

- a. What characteristics do these all share with humans?





Did your list above have all the problems discussed in the previous paragraph?

List the problems that are not on your original list.

WHAT ARE INTENTIONS?

Clearly, intention is not a simple matter. We may never be in a position to know what someone's real intentions were in a particular situation. And are we really clear on what it is to have an intention? Umpires, spectators, courts, and the rest of us are frequently making judgements about the intentions of others, and we sometimes place great importance on intentions (for example, in murder cases), but what are they? To answer this we can shift from the outsider's "third person" perspective to the insider's "first person" point of view. That is, I ask: what is it for me to intend something?

Here the problem is not that we are too far away from the thing we are looking for but that we are too close to it. On the face of it, it seems that most, perhaps all, of my actions involve intentions. But first we need a clarification of the term.

Sometimes when we use the word *intention* we mean "prior intent". With this meaning, if I intend to go to Bali next year then having that intention may involve me in no actions at this early stage – I don't yet need to book tickets, for instance.

If I leap off a cliff when hang-gliding, I must do so intentionally. In that case I will also have had prior intentions, such as when I first decide to hang-gliding, when I go to the cliff, when I put on the glider, etc. But there need not always be prior intent. Actions typically involve intentions at the time of the action. If I swerve to miss a dog that has run onto the road, I do so intentionally but with no previous intent; I just act intentionally the instant I take in the situation.

So prior intent is one kind of intention, but there is also intention-in-action, or intentional action. So what is intention in this second case?

We might get closer if we ask: are there any non-intentional actions?

To clarify this we need to think of the scope of three concepts:

- intention
- action
- behaviour.



Wittgenstein and intention

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) was one of the most famous and influential philosophers of the twentieth century. He was born in Austria but did most of his philosophical work at Cambridge University in England. In his later thought his main interests were in the nature of linguistic meaning and the nature of mental states. One provoking question that he asked was this: "when I 'raise my arm' my arm goes up. And the problem arises: what is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm?" (Philosophical

Investigations, 3rd edition, Blackwell: London, 1953, p. 161, secs. 621–2). He also observed that "When I raise my arm I do not usually try to raise it". He was seeking to isolate what it is that makes intentional acts intentional. It is not "trying" that makes the arm-raising intentional, yet there is something that makes the intentional act different from the mere event of my arm rising. He left it to later philosophers to try to answer his questions.

DEDUCTIVE REASONING: MODUS PONENS AND MODUS TOLLENS

In all of these examples we are considering what would be the case if something else were the case. To contemplate this sort of thing we need to use our imagination. Sometimes imagination is simply day-dreaming, considering possibilities without wondering at all about their truth. But we also use our imagination to probe the potentialities of the world, and to do this effectively we need to apply some tests of sound hypothetical thinking. The art of doing this successfully is one branch of logic, called conditional reasoning.

To see how some conditional reasoning works, we need first to recall the basic form of all reasoning, which has three parts: reason (or reasons), inference, conclusion.



A good argument must have a strong inference. A simple example of a strong inference is this:



This is a strong inference, since rain always falls from clouds. We could try to imagine some weird meteorological situation in which rain was falling but no clouds were in the sky. Maybe the clouds evaporated as a result of the rain falling from them. But since this is highly improbable, the inference must be a very strong one.

However, some inferences are even stronger than this. They are not 99.9% certain; they are 100% certain. These inferences are known as *deductively valid*.

An example of deductive validity is this:



Here the conclusion must be true, if the reasons are both true. The conclusion follows infallibly from the premises. The inference is 100% certain. We cannot even imagine a weird scenario in which this reasoning fails. We can know that the conclusion follows from the premises even if we have never met Niels or any Norwegian tennis-players.

Reasoning with deductive validity is of great use in ordinary life, but it is also a vital part of mathematics, logic and computing. Here we are only looking at deductive reasoning that uses conditionals (that is, if-then sentences).

INTENTIONALITY

Intentionality is a technical term used by philosophers and others to refer to a key mental capacity, the capacity to represent the world. It is significantly different from simple consciousness. When we look at the moon we see certain shapes and colours. So too presumably do many other animal species. But we also see it *as the moon*. For this to be possible we must also have the concept of the moon, which for English-speakers is marked in the English language by the word 'moon', in French by *la lune*, in Italian by *luna* and in the ancient language of Sanskrit by *candrah*.

Read the following:

Astronauts landed on the moon for the first time in 1969.

Ganymede is a moon of Jupiter.

He is many moons old.

There is a new moon in the night sky.

A moon is a satellite.

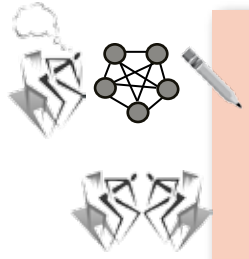
Are we using the word 'moon' in the same sense in each case? _____

Are we referring to the same 'object' in each case? _____

Which of the above uses are the same? _____

What difference does it make if we say 'a moon' rather than 'the moon'?

Suppose it is true that coyotes howl at the moon. What is taking place in this example? The coyote has no linguistic concept of the moon. Nevertheless, if coyotes systematically respond behaviourally to what we call the moon, they must have some sort of concept of the moon. For them, what we call the moon must be more than just a whitish circular blip (recognizing that they won't even have the concept of whiteness or circularity). It must be something they recognize in some way, which is more than just being something that they see. Thus there must be in their mental world some primitive form of 'intentionality', a primitive capacity to represent the world, even if not one much like ours. For us, however, the moon is not just circular and whitish; it is spherical and solid, and it moves; and we can wonder what there is on the other side of the moon. So we have a higher-level representation in our conceptual scheme. We can form an idea of the moon and modify that idea as our understanding of it develops. We make that idea part of our belief system, and we can reflect on the truth of those beliefs and test them against beliefs based on other experiences.



Think of some examples by yourself and then brainstorm as a whole class. Write down three arguments in which the fallacy of equivocation occurs. (Note: it is quite difficult to think of examples of equivocation. That is probably because we don't pay as much attention to the exact meanings of words as we should.)

With a partner, evaluate the arguments. Then compare whether you agree that they all commit the fallacy of equivocation. Discuss where you differ.

UNDERSTANDING DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS: DENYING THE ANTECEDENT AND AFFIRMING THE CONSEQUENT

Before tackling this section, it is a good idea to revise Chapter Five, Section Nine (“Understanding deductive arguments: modus ponens and modus tollens”). The topic in this present section is very closely related to 5.9. Both sections are about **conditional reasoning** – that is, reasoning that uses sentences of the form “If A, then B”. Section 5.9 is about the *valid* uses of conditional sentences. This section is about *fallacious* uses of conditionals.

Consider the following three arguments:

1. If the roads are slippery and wet, then you need to drive carefully. But the roads are not slippery and wet, so you don't need to drive carefully.
2. If there is a fire in the room, then there is oxygen present. But there is no fire in the room, so there is no oxygen.
3. If the government made military service compulsory, then it would be thrown out at the next election. But it is not going to make military service compulsory, so it will not be thrown out at the next election.

Clearly, all three are very bad arguments. But what exactly is wrong with them? A careful reading shows that all three have exactly the same logical form. The form is this:

If A, then B.

Not A.

Therefore, not B.

What is wrong with these arguments? The answer is that **premises of that form never give deductively valid support to that conclusion.**

Arguments of this form are always fallacious. The fallacy is known as **denying the antecedent**. It is called this because the antecedent, A, is denied in the second premise (Not A).

Here are three more examples where it is not so obvious that the argument is fallacious.

4. If today is Tuesday, then this must be Belgium. But today is not Tuesday, so this is not Belgium.
5. If you want to be popular then you need to always be cheerful. But you don't want to be popular, so you don't need to always be cheerful.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Aesthetics¹

AESTHETICS AND JUDGEMENT

Of all the areas of philosophy, aesthetics is likely to be the one that each of us uses every day of our lives. For example, when we look at the world around us and say things such as: 'I like that...', 'She's hot...', 'What a brilliant sunset...', 'Lovely dress...', 'Wicked hat...', 'Beautiful building...' we are making aesthetic judgments. We are also making aesthetic judgements when we say such things as 'ugly', 'unfashionable dress' 'I don't like the look of that house', and the like.

So what are aesthetic judgements? What sorts of judgements count as aesthetic judgements? Are they the same sorts of judgements as we make in, say, ethics or science, or politics? Are there any rules covering these sorts of judgements? If there are rules, where do they come from?

There is sometimes strong disagreement among philosophers and artists about what aesthetics is. Sometimes aesthetics is said to be the philosophy of art, but while there is a lot of common ground between aesthetics and philosophy of art, they are not the same thing.

But let us start with the sorts of judgements we make when we consider the aesthetic properties of objects.

Look at the pictures that follow and make up your own mind.

Look at the following pictures. Circle either 'like' or 'do not like', then write in the spaces provided.

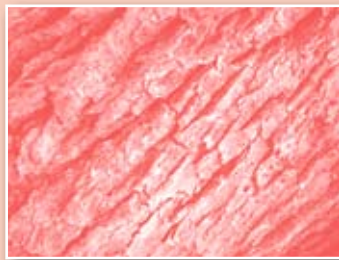


Figure 1



Figure 2

I like/do not like the picture in Figure 1 because _____

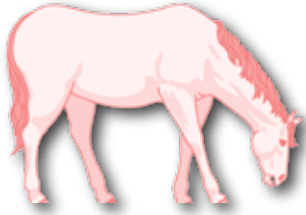
I like/ do not like the picture in Figure 2 because _____

¹ The authors gratefully acknowledge the considerable help Kate Vickers provided in writing this chapter.

WORDS AND CONCEPTS

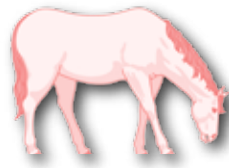
For the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure language is a series of signs. The science of understanding signs is called semiotics and the process of interpreting them is called semiosis. But just what is a 'sign'?

A sign is composed of a signifier and the signified. A signifier is a sound image (such as a word) and the signified is the concept to which the word refers.



Take the concept 'horse'.

Many cultures would recognise what animal is represented by the picture, but it is arbitrary what signifier (word) they use to refer to the animal or name the concept (signified). Would they use *Pferd* (German), *hest* (Danish), *horse*, *cheval* (French), *caballo* (Spanish), *cavallo* (Italian) or another entirely different word? The signifier is something we learn as part of learning the language, but there is nothing special in the word itself that tells us what it means. We learn the relationship between signifier and signified by bringing them together (think back to the picture books that young children use). If we were brought up in a culture where **Houyhnhnm** was the word for horses, that is the word (signifier) we would use¹.



= horse

Put the name under the column where you think it fits best. Give a reason why it belongs there.

	Cat	Not cat	Not sure	Why
Goat				
Katze				
Hippopotamus				
Lion				
Pussycat cuddly toy				
Felix, cartoon cat				

¹ Read the last four parts of *Gulliver's Travels*, by Jonathon Swift